

February 16, 2024

Delegate Marc Korman
Chair, House Environment and Transportation Committee
Room 251
House Office Building
Annapolis, Maryland 21401

Re: In Support of HB538, Housing Expansion and Affordability Act of 2024

Dear Honorable Chair Korman and members of the House Environment and Transportation Committee,

I am writing on behalf of Community Assistance Network, Inc., (CAN), the designated anti-poverty Community Action Agency (nonprofit) serving Baltimore County and a committed advocate for community development and affordable housing initiatives. We have reviewed HB538, titled the "Housing Expansion and Affordability Act of 2024," and we are pleased to express our enthusiastic support for this critical legislation.

In Baltimore County CAN operates the three largest homeless shelters, a Community Choice Pantry and assists hundreds of families a year avoid evictions. The lack of affordable housing is the number one stress on almost all of our clients (your constituents). HB538 addresses key issues related to land use and zoning that directly impact the availability and affordability of housing in our communities. We believe this legislation will significantly contribute to the expansion of affordable housing options and foster sustainable growth. The provisions outlined in the bill, particularly those related to manufactured homes, adequate public facilities, and qualified projects, align with our organization's mission of "Helping People. Changing Lives".

The specific provisions of HB538 that prohibit local legislative bodies from impeding the placement of certain manufactured homes and restrict the use of adequate public facility laws to deny permits for state-funded affordable housing projects are commendable steps toward removing barriers to affordable housing development.

We appreciate the forward-thinking approach of the bill, especially in encouraging local jurisdictions to allow increased density for qualified projects near rail stations and especially those owned by nonprofit organizations. These measures will facilitate nonprofits like CAN to directly contribute to the development of diverse housing options, promoting inclusivity and addressing the critical issue of affordable housing shortages.

CAN firmly believes that HB538 represents a positive and necessary step towards ensuring that all members of our community have access to safe, affordable housing. We commend the bill's sponsors and urge approval of this legislation for the betterment of our clients and our larger community.



CAN

Community Assistance Network

Helping People. Changing Lives.

7900 E. Baltimore Street
Baltimore, MD 21224

Thank you for your attention to this matter. We look forward to witnessing the positive impact that HB538 will have on affordable housing initiatives in our county and state.

Please feel free to contact me at mposner@canconnects.org or 410-336-8035 if you have any questions and/or need additional information.

Sincerely,

Mitchell Posner
Executive Director